

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



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SIXTY-SECOND YEAR NO. 47
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Ordnance Load: Marine Corps Cpl. Sandra Acree prepares to mount a missile to an F-35B Lightning II aboard USS *Makin Island* in the Pacific Ocean. US Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Nicolas Atehortua

'Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act' signed into law

Military spouses who hold professional licenses will find a smoother transition when transferring their professional licenses during moves across state lines under a newly enacted federal law.

The new law requires states to recognize service members and spouses' valid professional licenses from other states for any job if they moved because of military orders. This law DOES NOT include law licenses.

Representative Mike Garcia spoke on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in late December in support of his bill, the Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act. This bill was included in H.R. 7939 (Veterans Auto and Education Improvement Act of 2022), which passed the U.S. House and Senate, and was signed into law by President Biden January, 5, 2023.

During his speech, Congressman Garcia made the following statement:

"In the midst of one of the most challenging times for our military in terms of recruitment

and retention, what this bill does is allow military spouses to cross-deck their professional licenses -- if they're a realtor, a nurse, a teacher, a beautician, a cosmetologist, whatever their profession is -- across state lines," said Garcia. "This bipartisan bill above all things would ease the burden for our military families. This is a win for our military families, for our national security, for our local communities who are in desperate need of these professionals, and even for our government who now enjoys the tax revenue from these dual-income families. And hopefully this translates into better recruitment and retention for our military."

Currently, 34 percent of military spouses require a professional license for their line of employment. While military spouse unemployment hovers over 20% (over five times above the national average), this legislation is critical to assisting our military families and spouses who make countless sacrifices to support their service-member family members.

MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE UPDATE

DOD Releases Memo Expanding Military Parental Leave Program

by Jim Garamone

The Department of Defense announced the expansion of, and guidelines for, the Military Parental Leave Program (MPLP) via Directive-type Memorandum 23-001 – "Expansion of the Military Parental Leave Program."

The expansion was made in accordance with DTM 23-001 and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, builds on the Department's support of military families and Service members by streamlining and enhancing the parental leave benefit for Service members.

Specifically, the expansion provides parental leave to active and reserve component service members (on active duty for 12 months or more) who have given

birth, adopted a child or had a child placed for adoption or long-term foster care with them. Birth parents will be granted 12 weeks of parental leave following a period of convalescent leave and non-birth parents will be granted 12 weeks of leave following the birth of their child. Adoptive parents and eligible foster parents will also be granted 12 weeks of parental leave. The MPLP is designed to allow members to care for their children while balancing the needs of their unit.

The memo — released and effective January 4, 2023 — is signed by Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr., the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

"It is important for the development of military families that members be able to care for their newborn, adopted or placed child or children," Cisneros says in the memo.

The memo further says that commanders must balance the needs of their units versus the needs of service members to use parental leave.

The memo specifically says that service members who give birth "will be authorized 12 weeks of parental leave following a period of convalescence to care for the child." Service members who are the non-birth parent will also be authorized 12 weeks of leave to care for the child.

The memo explains that convalescent leave may be authorized for the recovery of the mother from giving birth if a doctor recommends it to address a specific medical condition and it is approved by the unit commander.

Service members who adopt a child or who have long-term foster care children placed with them will also be authorized 12 weeks of parental leave to care

for the child.

Members who were on maternity convalescent leave or caregiver leave on 27 December (before the new policy went into effect) and had not used up their leave will transition to leave under the new policy without any loss of benefit and will receive the expanded benefit.

For example, birth parents on six weeks of maternity convalescent leave or six weeks of primary caregiver leave as of 27 December will, with transition to the new policy, receive a combined total of eighteen weeks of non-chargeable leave following the birth of their child.

In the future, under the new policy, the amount of convalescent leave birth parents receive will be determined on an individual basis, and the amount of parental leave

FAMILY LEAVE page 2

Honoring local military kids Tea party, magician class, animal show and more

by Ken Swarner

The Mad Hatter, magic, cookie decorating and a live animal show delight and honor military children from around the greater San Diego area for free January 21 in National City. The Salute to Military Kids open house shows military families that the local community understands that the children also make sacrifices as part of our nation's defense, and they too deserve to be honored.

Sponsored by the Armed Forces Dispatch, Task Force Media, and Grand Canyon University, the 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. event features photos with Alice from Alice in Wonderland, a drink toast with the Mad Hatter, cookie decorating with the Queen of Hearts, a live animal show hosted by the White Rabbit, a magician class with take home magic cards, and more, all free and supported by local business and community organizations.

"We've been hosting these military family events since 2003," said Ken Swarner, president of Task Force Media. "It is important that our men and women in uniform aren't just recognized for their sacrifices, but also to be shown that the community understands the stress and strains on their kids."

SALUTE TO MILITARY KIDS page 2

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See page 5



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Modern-day Minuteman makes history: First Air National Guard flight nurse receives Distinguished Flying Cross Medal

by Capt. Andrea Kostiuk
133rd Airlift Wing

Maj. Katie Lunning made history as the first Air National Guard flight nurse to be presented the Distinguished Flying Cross Medal, in front of family, friends, and members of the 133 Airlift Wing in St. Paul, Minn., Jan 7.

She was awarded the DFC for her actions as a Critical Care Air Transport Team (CCATT) nurse in support of Operation Allies Refuge and the evacuation of Kabul on August 26, 2021.

Maj. Katie Lunning, ICU nurse manager at the VA Central Iowa Health Care System and Minnesota Air National Guard air transport nurse, stands in the Des Moines, Iowa, VA Clinic. Lunning was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross Jan. 7, and is the second nurse ever presented the award. US Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Samantha Hircock

were briefed on the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and to be ready – although no one knew exactly for what. Around the same time, the two CCATT teams assigned to the 379th AES decreased to one: Lunning was now the only CCATT nurse in the region and thus assigned to every medical mission.

For two weeks, Lunning flew up to six missions a day to evacuate casualties from Hamid Karzai International Airport. Up to 36 times per day, she would trek three blocks pushing a stretcher through Taliban-controlled city streets to the Kabul Coalition Hospital. There, she received a critical patient ready for transport, exchanged equipment, and returned to the aircraft with nothing more than her M-9 to protect her. After the day's missions were complete, she caught a couple hours of sleep and within hours was flying again. Her nursing heart was overflowing, but her body was exhausted.

August 26 began routine; Lunning had completed the day's missions and was almost

aeromedical evacuation flight to Landstuhl, Germany.

The skills of the ICU Nurse perfectly complemented the CCATT nurse who saved multiple lives during that flight. From gaining intravenous access to an 18-month old patient with zero pediatric supplies to managing a lifesaving in-flight massive blood resuscitation of a post-operative patient, the skills from her civilian career kept her fighting for the patients that needed her expertise.

A mother herself, Lunning recalls interacting with the sibling of the critical 18-month old. "At one point I took her hand and placed it on the baby's and held it there. I wanted her to know

that we cared and were doing our best to save her brother."

The modern-day minuteman, who rapidly deployed to serve her nation, displayed leadership, professional competence and aerial skill that culminated in all 22 lives saved during the single largest aeromedical evacuation airlift in Kabul Coalition Hospital's history.

"Thank you, Major Lunning, for your dedication to the mission, for your bravery under fire, serving our nation with your medical expertise, and your care for humanity. You make us all very proud," said Loh. "Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you a true American hero, Maj. Katie Lunning."

Navy seizes thousands of smuggled rifles in Gulf of Oman, blames Iran

by J.P. Lawrence, Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Navy accused Iran of smuggling weapons and war supplies for at least the third time in recent months, following the seizure of more than 2,000 rifles from a fishing vessel transiting the Gulf of Oman.

A boarding crew from Navy patrol coastal ship USS *Chinook* intercepted the vessel carrying 2,116 AK-47 rifles on Jan. 6 along a maritime route from Iran to Yemen, Naval Forces Central Command said in a statement Jan. 10.

"This shipment is part of a continued pattern of destabilizing activity from Iran," Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of NAVCENT and the 5th Fleet, said in the statement.

The Navy detained six Yemeni citizens, whose repatriations are in progress, the NAVCENT statement said.

Patrol coastal ship USS *Monsoon* and destroyer USS *The Sulivans* supported the interdiction, the statement said.

Last week's seizure comes after more than 170 tons of potentially explosive chemicals were seized on a fishing vessel in November. And last month, 50 tons of ammunition rounds, fuses and rocket propellants were captured on another vessel, 5th Fleet has said.

Analysts say Iran and the U.S. and its allies in the Middle East are locked in a cold war of armed proxy groups, covert attacks and influence peddling.

The U.S. has levied numerous sanctions on Iran in recent months, accusing Tehran of carrying out a brutal national crackdown on protests. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan accused Iran on Monday of "contributing to widespread war crimes" in Ukraine due to Tehran's sales of combat drones to Russia, The Associated Press reported.

The U.S. says that smuggling to militant groups has increased in recent years in the busy shipping lanes of the Middle East.

Iran has been accused of transferring rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and missiles to Houthi rebels in Yemen, despite a United Nations arms embargo.

The U.S. Navy says it hopes to build a 100-vessel fleet of unmanned surface ships, or drone boats, to patrol the waters of the Middle East by the end of summer.

FAMILY LEAVE

Continued from page 1
will be a standard 12 weeks.

Members (other than birth parents), on caregiver leave, e.g., a father on three weeks of secondary caregiver leave, as of 27 December, will also transition to leave under the new policy and receive a combined total of twelve weeks of parental leave.

The transition to the expanded parental leave benefit is intended to occur without interruption.

The twelve weeks of parental leave may be taken in the first year of the child's life. "Parental

leave may not be transferred to create a shared benefit, even between members of a dual military couple," according to the memo.

"Members will be afforded the opportunity to take full advantage of the Military Parental Leave Program consistent with their desires operational requirements and training workloads of their unit," Cisneros wrote.

The leave must be administered in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the DTM.

The expansion of the MPLP takes precedence over previous DoD issuances and service regulations.

SALUTE TO MILITARY KIDS EVENT

Continued from page 1

Military children must often move leaving favorite friends and schools, for example. "Plus, they go through milestones and important moments when a parent is deployed and can't be there to share the event," Swarner added. "These kids should get a fun day, but more importantly, find out that the community is behind them."

All military families, active, reserve and retired are welcome to attend the salute event. Simply go to swarner.lpages.co/120-san-diego-event/ to RSVP. Reminders and event updates will be provided to those that register.

"On the RSVP site is also information on the animal show times, plus families can register for their specific time to interact with the characters from Alice in Wonderland," Swarner added.

Task Force Media operates under the parent company, The Ranger Publishing Company, in business since 1951 near Tacoma, Washington. The company partners in San Diego with the Armed Forces Dispatch, a weekly newspaper serving military in the greater San Diego area since 1961.

Lunning, who serves part time in the Minnesota Air National Guard, was working as an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nurse manager at the Iowa VA Hospital when she learned of a short-notice deployment opportunity.

"The uniqueness of the guard is that the citizen airmen serve both their nation and their communities," said Lt. Gen. Michael Loh, director, Air National Guard. "That is exactly what Katie does."

The concept of the citizen airman dates back to the Revolutionary War, when minutemen were called upon to rapidly deploy to defend the colonies from attack. Today the minuteman is the symbol of the National Guard and Lunning the modern-day example.

When the nurse originally assigned to the deployment had to withdraw from the mission, Lunning packed her gear and within three short weeks of notification, was enroute to serve with the 379th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron (AES) at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. The critical care nursing skills she was using day in and day out as an ICU nurse would soon save countless lives.

Less than a month after she arrived, the transition of power in Afghanistan was announced. All personnel at Al Udeid Air Base

Running on adrenaline in the face of imminent danger, Maj. Katie Lunning repeated her mantra, "Scary stuff we can't control."

asleep when her phone rang. It was the team doctor. "We need to report for duty in 20 minutes. Get dressed and go," he told her. Within 20 minutes she was back at the hangar and briefed on the situation in Kabul. A suicide bomber attacked the airport in Kabul, killed dozens and dozens more were injured. They were flying into danger and chaos.

Running on adrenaline in the face of imminent danger, she repeated her mantra, "Scary stuff we can't control." And she was off, down her familiar route in now hostile territory. Under small arms fire and the looming threat of a second suicide bomber, Lunning recalls focusing her mind on the patients that needed her. She performed patient triage and intake for 22 patients before they embarked on an eight-hour

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US military has unusually high rate of food insecurity, study finds

by John Vandiver
Stars and Stripes

More than 25 percent of active-duty service members lack consistent access to enough food for their households, and Army personnel or on-base residents are especially at risk for food insecurity, according to a new report.

The findings in the Rand Corp. study are at odds with the conventional wisdom that those most prone to food insecurity in the ranks are junior enlisted members with large families.

Instead, the majority of those affected, 67 percent, were early- to mid-career enlisted personnel between the pay grades of E-4 and E-6, Rand said.

“Food insecure members were more likely than food secure members to report being single with children or married without children,” the report said. “They also were more likely to be a racial or ethnic minority and were disproportionately in the Army, to a lesser extent in the Navy, and rarely in the Air Force.”

But the study, published Tuesday, also indicated uncertainty about the root causes of the problem. One question that vexed researchers: Why do enlisted personnel who earn more than their civilian counterparts report much higher levels of food insecurity?



Marines and Sailors participate in a food bank donation in San Francisco. US Marine Corps photo by Aldo Sessarego

Only 9 percent of civilians with similar characteristics struggle to put food on the table, a difference of 16 percentage points, according to the study.

“The higher rate of food insecurity among military personnel is surprising and needs to be better understood,” the report said.

Study participants were asked a series of questions on food security such as how often they could not afford sufficient groceries and whether they skipped meals because of a lack of money.

The study, which Congress directed the Pentagon to sponsor as part of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, found that 15.4 percent of troops would be classified by the Department of Agriculture as having low food security in 2018.

A further 10.4 percent could be classified as having very low food security. The USDA defines food security as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.”

Among the key findings: 14 percent reported using government food assistance programs in the past year, while others were concerned that seeking

help could negatively affect their career or security clearance.

Food-insecure members also were more likely to report having a second job or a spouse with a part-time job. Still, the findings suggest that at least some military members are opting to keep money in reserve rather than spend it on immediate food needs.

For example, 69 percent of food-insecure service members reported having money in savings for emergency expenses.

And 29 percent reported being “very comfortable and secure” or “able to make ends meet without much difficulty” despite qualifying as food-insecure. Of the remaining 71 percent, nearly two-thirds reported that their difficulties were “occasional” versus “tough” or “in over your head,” Rand said.

The findings point to “the complex nature of food insecurity problems in the military,” Rand said, adding that more research is needed to grasp why food-insecure members do not use emergency savings to address their needs.

As part of the study, Rand examined whether a monthly ba-

sic needs allowance that would bring members’ household income to 130 percent of the federal poverty line would help. In interviews with stakeholders, opinions were divided.

Those in favor of a basic needs allowance told Rand that having enough money for food

was the key issue and that additional compensation would help solve the problem.

Others argued that since enlisted personnel are better-compensated than their civilian counterparts, pay wasn’t the driving force and other underlying causes needed to be identified.

Pentagon begins work to strip DOD of Confederate-linked names and items, rename 9 Army posts

by Corey Dickstein, Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon on Jan. 5 instructed all Defense Department organizations to begin working to remove names and items associated with the Confederacy as recommended last year by a congressional commission.

William LaPlante, the undersecretary of defense for acquisition and sustainment, gave the order, allowing officials to begin removing or renaming Confederate-linked items and properties across the department. The order comes some three months after Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin signed off on all the recommendations provided by the Congress-mandated Naming Commission in three reports released last year.

The Pentagon has until Jan. 1, 2024, to carry out those recommendations, which include renaming two Navy ships and nine Army installations in southern states. Air Force Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder, the Pentagon’s top spokesman, said last Thursday that military officials had developed plans to begin the processes to rename and remove items, and he expected them to meet their Jan. 1 deadline.

Mandated by Congress in 2021, the Naming Commission found more than 1,100 Defense Department assets across the U.S. military’s inventories that honored the Confederacy. It determined the Pentagon would have to spend some \$62.5 million to remove and rename those assets. Ryder said he did not have a separate cost estimate from the Pentagon.

The items marked for change include hundreds of signs, roads, memorials and buildings on U.S. military posts in the United States, Germany and Japan. It includes items at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., including paintings and building that honor Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, an 1829 West Point graduate who also served as the institution’s superintendent before resigning his U.S. commission to helm the Confederate Army in the Civil War. It also recommended the removal of a prominent Confederate monument at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

The commission recommended the Navy rename USS *Chancellorsville*, a guided-missile cruiser named for a Civil War battle that the Confederates won, and USNS *Maurry*, an oceanographic survey ship named for a Confederate naval commander.

While the commission declined to recommend new names for those ships, it made recommendations for the Army installations that it determined should be renamed.

Learn what the commissioners recommended more renamings at <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2023-01-05/pentagon-congress-confederates-army-bases-8661981.html>.

Army

- Fort Rucker Soldier earns Soldier’s Medal for saving man from fire
- Trial set for Army officer suing police over violent stop
- Army hockey player recovering after serious neck injury
- Colonel sentenced to dismissal after conviction for attempted sexual assault
- Army couldn’t effectively address Gen Z’s misconceptions about Army life in 2022



Navy

- Probe into Sailor suicides reveals taxed mental health system aboard USS *George Washington*
- Navy packs away historic artifacts to prepare for new DC museum

Marine Corps

- Marine who dumped thousands of rounds of stolen ammo loses appeal
- With 2 Sikhs headed to Marine boot camp, legal battle is ongoing

Air Force

- Rescue crews honored for response to Iranian ballistic missile attack

Space Force

- Space Force shelve ‘weather data as a service’ model, for now
- Tankers in space? New report says ‘true military mobility’ demands a more agile USSF

Coast Guard

- Coast Guard seizes 350 pounds of illegally caught fish off Texas coast

National Guard

- Florida National Guard activated to help with migrant increase
- A general is fired from the scandal-plagued California National Guard

Your Military

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- A new radar installation in the Pacific will let US forces look over the horizon
- DOD civilians in Japan air their complaints about restrictions to on-base medical care

Veterans

- Calls to veterans suicide hotline spiked over New Year’s holiday
- Troops recently accounted for from past conflicts include USS *Oklahoma*, bomber crew members
- Veterans unemployment up slightly in December, despite overall gains
- Mary Stewart, World War II SPAR beloved by Coasties, dead at 101

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Military Working Dog Registry established to improve care



Army Maj. Tiffany Kimbrell, assigned to the 949th Medical Detachment, gives a brief during a veterinary class at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq on Aug. 11, 2020. A Military Working Dog Trauma Registry was launched by the Department of Defense to track MWD casualty care epidemiology, treatment, diagnostics, and outcomes to improve care. Official photo courtesy of US Air Force

by Robert Hammer, MHS Communications

The Department of Defense established a registry for military working dogs, referenced in the military as MWDs, because it recognized a need for a database to keep track of morbidity and mortality during deployment.

In January 2022, the Military Working Dog Trauma Registry Opens JTS.health.mil was launched by the Department of Defense Center of Excellence for Trauma Joint Trauma System Opens JTS.Health.mil and “captures military working dog casualty care epidemiology, treatment, diagnostics, and outcomes from point of injury through recovery,” said Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Sarah Cooper, chief of animal medicine with the Defense Health Agency Veterinary Service Division.

Database will improve care. In the last two decades, more than 4,000 MWDs dogs were injured in combat, but detailed informa-

tion on the dogs’ injuries and treatments were not captured in any existing database, making it difficult to do any research and analysis. When a human warfighter is injured, their injuries are tracked and researched so this information can help improve treatments, recovery, and prevention in future similar incidents.

Seeing a need to keep track of this information, “in 2017, the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps established a community of interest to identify MWD trauma care gaps, and the need for an MWD Trauma Registry was established,” said Cooper. In addition, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year Opens Congress.gov 2022 requires development of a comprehensive trauma care registry that includes MWDs.

This registry will allow military veterinarians and working dog handlers to draw lessons learned and improve the training and medical care provided to these highly trained canine warfighters. Data from the registry might also help in the development of protective equipment.

“The primary objective of the MWD Trauma Registry mir-

rors that of the DOD Trauma Registry, which is performance improvement. By collecting MWD casualty care data, DHA Veterinary Services can support both the medical readiness of the MWD as well as the readiness of U.S. Army Veterinary Services Opens APHC,” she said.

Ensuring the health readiness of MWDs is vital according to Cooper. “Military Working Dogs are a force multiplier and offer a capability unmatched by any other technology. Improving MWD trauma readiness and outcomes protects this critical force protection asset.”

“The design and functionality of the registry was based on the Joint Trauma System’s Department of Defense Trauma Registry. The data fields and patient flow were modified to reflect Army Veterinary Services as the health care providers and MWDs as the patients,” said Cooper.

Ultimately, the registry on MWD injuries aims to improve their health.

“The bond between a handler and their MWD is truly special, and my goal is to keep that MWD healthy, by their handler’s side, and performing their mis-

sion for the Joint Force,” said Cooper.

Selecting Military Working Dogs for the Registry. Military Working Dogs that meet the selection criteria are identified through three sources:

- The DD Form 3073 - K9 Tactical Combat Casualty Care Card or DD Form 3074 - K9 Treatment and Resuscitation Record
- The veterinary electronic health record
- The U.S. Transportation Command Regulating and Command and Control Evacuation System

Once identified, the data abstractor reviews all the information available to fill the data fields in the MWD Trauma Registry.

The registry, which is funded by the DHA, has gotten accolades across the military community. “Support for the MWD Trauma Registry has been tremendous. The Joint Trauma System has been instrumental in its development, launch, and support. When the capabilities of the MWD Trauma Registry are briefed, reactions are always positive and generate questions and interest,” said Cooper.

The MWD Trauma Registry will continue to be populated by abstracting data from prospective and retrospective MWD casualties. In addition, there are plans to move the MWD Trauma Registry into the Military Health System Information platform.



Ships Underway
Total Battle Force: 293
 (USS 237, USNS 56)
 Deployed ships: 101
 (USS 67, USNS 34)
 Underway: 41
 (37 Deployed, 4 Local)
Ships Deployed by Fleet
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How to recession-proof your career

by Dr. Daneen Skube

Tribune Content Agency

Q: All financial indicators seem to be pointing to a recession in 2023 and layoffs in business. Are there ways I can recession-proof my career this year?

A: Yes, the most effective way to recession-proof your career is make sure you're creating the highest value that your boss cares about every day. If you don't know exactly what is on the video tape that you wish your boss would see from you, this is the year to figure that out and deliver these results.

Since we're entering a new year, it's a natural time to ask your boss for a priority meeting. Ask your boss this question, "If you had a magic wand, and could use it to get me to deliver specific results this year what would I be doing that I'm not doing already?" If your boss is vague, ask him or her to describe a video clip of what he or she would like you to do.

After this meeting, you should leave with a road map on what behaviors would make you invaluable to your boss. Keep in mind that even if your boss gives you an unachievable

goal like, "double our sales," you at least know the area that is your boss's priority.

If despite your best efforts you're laid-off, then your track record and skill set put you in the best position to immediately land an even better position. The

INTERPERSONAL EDGE:

bottom line on being recession proof is employers seek out talent, even when they're financially belt tightening.

To the extent your company is considering lay-offs, this is a good time to pay down credit cards, and work on having a six-month emergency fund. Anxiety is never our friend when we need clear thinking. If you're living paycheck to paycheck, you'll be terrified of losing your financial lifeline. Better to know you have a buffer to buy groceries.

We've gone from the trend of the "Great Resignation," to "Quietly Quitting," and are now facing a recession that gives more power back to employers. If you've been quietly quitting or doing the minimum, you're the first one your boss will look to lay-off.

If you hate your job, your company, or your boss, this is a good year to job hunt. Most of

us are not skilled poker players, and if you hate your situation you're probably broadcasting that attitude. Seeking a better job while you have a job, is always a more powerful move than waiting until you're unemployed.

2023 is also a good year to expand your skill set. Talk to your boss and see if there is any training your company might pay for, certificates you could pursue, or even degrees that enhance your value. Also, the more you know, the more you'll enjoy your work. Employees with the most education often get the first shot at the most interesting work opportunities.

A recession doesn't mean you cower in fear and negative anticipation of bad things. Every year trees have a recession when winter arrives. Trees know seasons are inevitable. In winter, they pull their sap into their core and bide their time. In spring they burst into activity. When the economy goes into winter, we can also pull into our core priorities and bide our time for better conditions.

AFMC partnership drives progress in mentoring, diversity

by Marisa Alia-Novobilski
Air Force Materiel Command

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio (AFNS) - A unique partnership between two Air Force Materiel Command personnel teams continues to progress both mentoring and diversity goals across the enterprise.

More than 2,500 uniformed and civilian Airmen and Guardians participated in a series of Cross-Cultural Mentoring Panels in 2022, which emphasized inclusivity, growth and greater understanding of mentoring relationships across all demographic groups.

"Mentorship is a critical strategy for developing our workforce to become more diverse, agile, and inclusive, both personally and professionally," said Amanda Smith-Nethercott, AFMC Manpower, Personnel and Services mentoring lead. "The overall goal of this campaign is to create an inclusive culture where people of all demographics feel comfortable requesting and thriving in mentoring relationships."

While AFMC has made a dedicated effort to emphasize the importance of mentorship for many years, feedback from sensing sessions and other forums indicated that individuals from under-represented demographics did not feel that mentoring was an option available to them. The Cross-Cultural Mentoring effort aimed to create opportunities for members of diverse demographic groups to share their stories and journeys so they could learn how to participate in

a mentoring relationship at every developmental level.

The AFMC Mentoring Team worked alongside the command Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Team to co-host eight virtual panels aligned with the designated Special Observance Months, to include Black History Month, Women's History Month, Disability Awareness Month, and more. The panels were led by members of the AFMC Major Command Barrier Analysis Working Groups—teams set up to address demographic and social barriers of diverse groups across the command.

"Our MAJBAWG teams are keenly focused on the barriers and issues that affect their specific focus area, whether it's something related to the LG-BTQ+ community or a barrier faced by women in the workplace. We leveraged their leadership and expertise for each of our panels," said Brianna Russ, DEIA team personnel specialist. "This helped increase respect and curiosity in conversations around demographic diversity. We also identified ways individuals could mitigate biases in a mentoring relationship, especially with someone of a different demographic."

The events, part of the ongoing culture shift driving towards greater equity and cultural proficiency across all enterprise demographics, also increased metrics across several areas. AFMC saw an increase in the numbers of minority and female participants in the Air Force's MyVector platform, a central

hub for career development and mentoring across the department. The AFMC program also drew interest from other Air Force organizations seeking guidance on how they could implement a similar program on a broader scale.

"We continue to focus on taking care of our people, and we're trying to set the standard for others to follow across the enterprise. We've had interest from a number of other Air and Space Force organizations in our mentoring program, and we plan to expand our offerings to include other demographics in 2023," Smith-Nethercott said.

AFMC will continue to offer the Cross-Cultural Mentoring Panels in 2023, with two additional events focused on mentoring for the officer and enlisted force. As the servicing command for the U.S. Space Force, the program endeavors to include more Guardian participation, both in the attendee and panel member roles.

The first panel event will be held in February in conjunction with the Black History Month observance. A formal announcement for the event will be released later this month.

"Mentoring plays a key role in an individual's growth, and it's something available to all. These events are key to encouraging new cross-cultural mentoring relationships, as we learn to understand and respect the cultural differences that make us stronger as a command," Smith-Nethercott said. "We look forward to increased participation by all in 2023."

Paying it forward: A gateway through JROTC



by Spc. Darbi Colson

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii - Inside the house of the Gandara family, a portrait of an Army officer hangs above the couch.

Ask any family member about Saul and their face immediately softens, an ear-to-ear smile adorns their face as they happily embark on a verbal journey of how he is changing their family narrative.

"To see my brother where he's at is amazing," said Erica Pulido. "I never thought he was gonna get where he is and everything started with him saying, I'm going to go join JROTC."

Capt. Saul Gandara, a first-generation Mexican American who grew up in the historic neighborhood of El Segundo Barrio in El Paso, Texas, and now serves as the company commander assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, believes that the mentorship and guidance he received in Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps has been key to his success.

Bowie High School's JROTC program, which was led by Maj. (Army-Ret.) Joseph Cancellare for 16 years, has a history of molding

students into better citizens and inspiring them to embark on paths that leave ripples of forward mobility in the community.

For Cancellare, choosing to continue to give back to his country as a JROTC instructor and taking on the role of mentor for a young Gandara came naturally.

A former JROTC cadet himself, Cancellare said the leadership he was exposed to when he was in the program served him well on active duty and in life.

"I know what the Army has done for me and I know what it's done for some of the people I've been associated with," he said. "It brings them to a point where they have a chance to compete and a way to move up in our society, and that's the primary reason for doing what I did."

Without the program or Cancellare's mentorship, Gandara is unsure where his life would be right now.

Gandara said that Cancellare's encouragement and dedication to the program allowed him to stay focused on school and off the streets of El Segundo Barrio - a welcome distraction from the challenges that are all but too familiar in the small, close-knit community.

"I never would've imagined I would be in this position," said Gandara about the experiences the Army has given him. "It's taken me from being a kid in El Segundo Barrio to now leading America's best and having the privilege to command. It's taken me to a position where

I can say that I've created a new legacy for my family and for my children."

When Gandara reflects on his adolescence, he recognizes how fortunate he was to have a positive role model like Cancellare in his life, and the impact one person can have on an individual.

After graduating from Bowie High School, Gandara joined the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M, Cancellare's alma mater, and now pays it forward to the school that was his gateway to a better life.

"Coming out of Bowie High School and going to A&M, I was blessed by the amount of people who were willing to help me, from my teachers to Maj. Cancellare," said Gandara. "I knew that one day, when I was financially stable and the finances allowed, I wanted to give back somehow."

Gandara, with the support of Cancellare and other BHS alumni, created the "From an Oso to an Aggie" scholarship awarded to a Bowie graduate who enrolls at Texas A&M.

"All we ask is that the student gets accepted and commits themselves to earning their degree," said Gandara. "It is a way to promote students to break the generational norm."

For Gandara, the investment pales to the intrinsic value helping others brings him because he can see himself in every student that receives the scholarship.

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Local Military

Ingalls Shipbuilding division was awarded a \$10.5 million contract for the modernization period planning of Zumwalt-class guided missile destroyers, USS *Zumwalt* (DDG 1000) and USS *Michael Monsoor* (DDG 1001).

“Ingalls is honored to have been selected to deliver this new capability with our Navy and industry partners,” Ingalls Shipbuilding President Kari Wilkinson said. “Our shipbuilders stand ready to do what is necessary to enable our fleet in the protection of peace around the world.”

HII has invested nearly \$1 billion in the infrastructure, facility and toolsets at Ingalls Shipbuilding enabling the work of Ingalls’ shipbuilders, improving product flow and process efficiency, and enhancing product quality.

Zumwalt-class destroyers feature a state-of-the-art electric propulsion system, wave-piercing tumblehome hull, stealth design and is equipped with the most advanced warfighting technology and weaponry. These ships will be capable of performing a range of deterrence, power projection, sea control, and command and control missions while allowing Navy to evolve with new systems and missions.

Ingalls has delivered 34 Arleigh Burke-class destroyers, with five currently under construction: Jack H. Lucas, Ted Stevens, Jeremiah Denton, George M. Neal and Sam Nunn.

Shipbuilder Ingalls wins advanced planning contract for Zumwalt-class ships



USS *Zumwalt* (DDG 1000) and USS *Michael Monsoor* (DDG 1001) sail together. Photo courtesy of US Navy

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NAVAL HOSPITAL CAMP PENDLETON: Dry January

Did you know it's Dry January? It's a movement that was popularized in 2013 that involves abstaining from alcohol for the month of January. While this can be seen as a means of detoxing after the holiday season, Dry January has several benefits including the following:

1. More energy (as a result of more restful sleep)
 2. Increased focus
 3. Increased hydration (as alcohol is the most dehydrating substance you can put in your body)
 4. Reduction of acid reflux
 5. Weight loss (due to consuming less calories, and “empty calories” at that)
 6. Reduced risk of certain cancers, strokes, and heart disease
 7. Lower blood pressure
 8. Promotes a healthier liver
 9. Could help cut back on drinking throughout the year
- Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton.

6 www.armedforcesdispatch.com THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 2023

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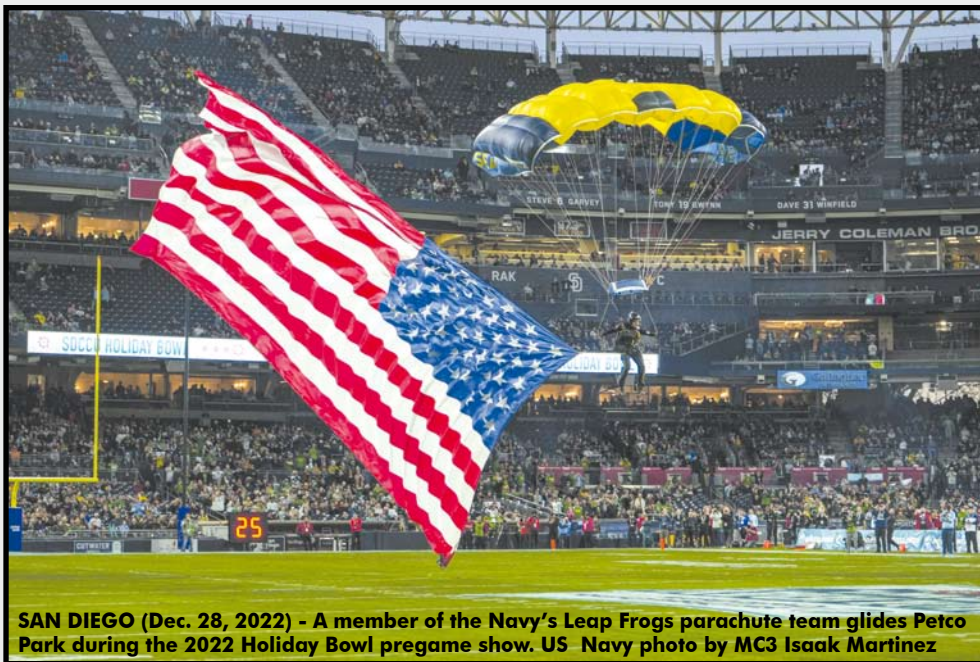
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Branch 61 is a veteran's service organization open to all enlisted Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard active duty, Reserve, Retired, and Veterans. As part of a National Organization, no one lobbies more effectively on behalf of all Sea Service personnel. www.fra.org is the website to learn more. The FRA has been working to solve career problems, to preserve and protect benefits and quality of life programs for all Sea Service personnel.

Club 61 provides a meeting place and an opportunity to socialize with your peers in a relaxed atmosphere. Come in and have a drink, shoot some pool, or listen to music. We offer dinners on Saturday nights, Karaoke on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays and 2nd and 4th Saturdays, free pool every Sunday.

Stop in and see us, we'd love to show you what we have.

VIEWS OF LOCAL MILITARY - PEOPLE, SHIPS, PLANES & MORE



SAN DIEGO (Dec. 28, 2022) - A member of the Navy's Leap Frogs parachute team glides Petco Park during the 2022 Holiday Bowl pregame show. US Navy photo by MC3 Isaak Martinez



PHILIPPINE SEA (Jan. 7, 2023) Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Brandon Shaw participates in a replenishment-at-sea between fleet replenishment oiler *Guadalupe* and San Diego-based destroyer *Decatur*. US Navy photo by MC2 David Negron



CAMP PENDLETON (Jan. 6, 2023) - Marine Lt. Col. Robert Jones, right, outgoing CO of 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, presents battalion colors to incoming CO Lt. Col. Clinton Hall during a change of command ceremony here. US Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Earik Barton



PHILIPPINE SEA Jan. 5, 2023

A Super Hornet launches from aircraft carrier *Nimitz* during routine operations. US Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Hannah Kantner

Camp Pendleton says goodbye to VITA tax program

by Lance Cpl. Nataly Espitia
Camp Pendleton

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance service, or VITA, will not be offered aboard Camp Pendleton for the 2023 tax filing season.

The program was offered on base since 2011 and finished after completing the 2021 federal and state tax returns (2022 tax filing season). The service was operated by service members in the Fleet Assistant Program from different units across the base, and offered free tax preparation services to all military personnel, retirees, and their families. The program is a partnership between the IRS and the military.

VITA has operated for over 50 years, offering tax free help to people who generally make \$60,000 or less per year; people with disabilities; and limited English-speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns.

Military OneSource (www.militaryonesource.mil) offers an alternative free tax assistance program for the upcoming 2023 tax season. This service is called: MilTax, and it's intended for active-duty personnel, military spouses, immediate and extended family members, and service providers. MilTax software is available now.

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SAILOR SPECIALTY Boatswain's mate embraces tradition, legacy of rating, to transform CNSP headquarters

by MC2 Melvin Fatimehin
SAN DIEGO - Throughout naval history, lines played an integral part in everyday shipboard operations including lowering a ship's anchor, aiding with small boat operations and overall marlinespike seamanship.

Outside of the general uses of lines on a ship, boatswain's mates preserve a traditional custom known as fancywork, a centuries-old form of decorative knot tying that is commonly used for providing grip on rails and stanchions during rough seas, beautifying the ship and lanyards for the boatswain's whistle, widely referred to as a bosun's whistle or pipe.

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Sean Hoffmann, assigned to Commander, Naval Surface Forces Pacific Fleet (CNSP), used his creativity and know-how as an experienced boatswain mate to incorporate fan-

cywork throughout the CNSP headquarters utilizing detailed knot-tying designs on pillars throughout the building.

"My reason for doing it is naval heritage and tradition.



Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Sean Hoffmann. US Navy photo by MC2 Melvin Fatimehin

You walk into the quarterdeck and you've got white walls, white pillars, and white stairs," said Hoffman. "I didn't see, a song a Sailor had made for the command and so I just thought

I could try fancywork."

The history of fancywork in the navy traces back to the 13th century in Arabic culture where sailors would create intricate macrame knots to pass time or barter when they arrived at a new port. After the Moorish conquest, their designs began to spread throughout Europe and into England. In

the 17th century, sailors ended up bartering and selling their macrame crafts to inhabitants of the new world which continued to be used aboard ships.

"A vast majority of our traditions came from England, the Dutch and the Spanish. We took stuff from these traditions, even rates and ranks," said Hoffmann. "Sailors didn't have money to go out and buy some fancy cloth, so they would unwind lines, take the strands and form diamonds with square knots holding it together."

Hoffmann's fancywork designs have transformed CNSP and his devotion to bringing life to the CNSP headquarters has been recognized by CNSP leadership.

"The fancywork Petty Officer Hoffmann did in our Surface Force Headquarters exemplifies navy tradition and pride," said Force Master Chief Greg Carlson. "I'm grateful for his craftsmanship, talent, and keeping the shipboard tradition alive. Thanks, Boats!"

Fancywork is a lengthy and complex process that requires

astute attention to detail. Lanyards that hold a bosun's whistle often take around ten hours to make when considering sizing, weaving and room for error, said Hoffmann.

Hoffmann also credits the command's enthusiasm as a motivation to continue creating baroque line designs.

"I appreciate it when people appreciate my work," said Hoffmann. "Sometimes when I am working, people say 'wow boats, that's looking good,' and it gives me a sense of pride and makes me want to do an even better job."

Virginia Jones, building manager with CNSP, said she's pleased with the new designs at headquarters. "We've never had anyone dedicate themselves to our facility the way BM1 Hoffmann," said Jones. "He's reminded all of us of the rich traditions of our Surface Navy and for boatswain's mates."



Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Airman John Sullivan, from Apple Valley, Calif., uses the multipurpose reconfigurable training system (MRTS) 3-D aboard aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72). Abraham Lincoln is underway conducting routine operations in 3rd Fleet. US Navy photo by MC3 Clayton A. Wren

by MC2 Zachary Melvin
PENSACOLA, Fla. - The Multipurpose Reconfigurable Training System (MRTS) 3D was recently implemented for testing for the first time on a Navy ship, San Diego-based aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln.

MRTS 3D is a system developed by Naval Air Warfare Systems Command Training Systems Division (NAWC TSD), the organization that constructs training simulations for the Navy. MRTS 3D provides an immersive training experience through a multi-touch screen by

MRTS 3D moves forward with implementation

placing Sailors in an interactive, 3D environment specific to their job requirements.

An additional benefit of the system is its capability to house and deliver other less interactive types of courseware developed for point of need training to support job performance and professional development.

"Time spent testing the MRTS 3D capability on Lincoln was invaluable," said Cmdr. Roger Phelps, Naval Education and Training Command's (NETC) Ready Relevant Learning program manager. "Feedback from all participants on Abraham Lincoln, to include end-users and leadership, has been both positive and constructive as we look to move forward with the MRTS 3D system."

MRTS 3D provides multiple software simulations by giving realistic, virtual training on a variety of different systems. MRTS 3D trainers are pro-

jected for use in Sailor rate training courses and also in pre-deployment team training onboard Navy ships.

Training scenarios can generate faults at various stages of the simulated operation for Sailors to fix. After a fault is discovered, Sailors follow shipboard procedures through the LCD monitors in order to return the system to full operational capacity.

"The training was very popular amongst the Sailors," said Phelps. "Ultimately, getting Sailors qualified and working as a team while increasing their opportunities to access information will greatly enhance mission readiness."

Approximately 170 Sailors conducted training over the course of eight days on Flight Deck Familiarization Training Expansion Package, Mobile Electric Power Plant, Operations Specialist VSIMS, Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuels) Conflagration Station and Pump room and Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System.

"MRTS 3D implementation on Abraham Lincoln is a big step forward for Ready Relevant Learning by getting the modernized training and delivery methods into the hands of Sailors at the deckplate underway, at the point of need, to ensure our Sailors are best prepared to fight and win," said Rear Adm. Pete Garvin, commander, NETC.

"We're taking feedback provided by the team on the waterfront and continuing to equip

our Sailors with the tools that they need for success."

The training received excellent reviews from Sailors of varying experience levels on board Lincoln. In particular, the flight deck familiarization was highly successful in adapting Sailors to flight deck operations prior to becoming fully qualified. It removes the hazards of training those who

NPS research in electromagnetic waves hunts for ship's 'ghost signals'

MONTEREY - Oceans cover more than 70 percent of the world and finding ships at sea - especially those that don't want to be found - is still quite a challenge.

Naval Postgraduate School Department of Meteorology professor Qing Wang is on the hunt, tracking atmospheric conditions that result in what are known as "ghost signals," where ship radar or radio communications travel and linger well beyond the line-of-sight horizon.

Back in the 1940s, the Navy recognized that under specific atmospheric conditions, electromagnetic frequencies would travel much longer distances. Understanding how and when this happens informs combat system designs and enables operational advantages for naval commanders.

"It's a hide-and-seek game," said Wang. "You want to see and hear others, especially the adversaries, but you don't want them to find you."

Before atmospheric ducts

have never worked on an active flight deck while providing visual references for how operations are conducted during flight operations.

MRTS 3D implementation onboard Lincoln contributes to the interest of meeting future fleet requirements through improved individual performance and enhanced mission readiness.

were understood, far-reaching radio signals shocked radio specialists who were hearing "ghost voices." Radar ducts are channels in the atmosphere that have the right temperature and water vapor conditions to bend radar waves along the curvature of the earth.

Targets can be detected hundreds, even thousands of kilometers away from the radar inside these ducts. If military radar is in one of these ducts with an adversary, operators can detect each other from great distances.

"We're meteorologists," says Wang, "so we want to be able to forecast the conditions that create radar ducts. That is the knowledge advantage that you want to have."

NPS offers graduate programs, masters and PhDs, both on and off campus and distance learning, through our academic departments.

- by Rose Mena-Werth, Naval Postgraduate School Office of University Communications. Continue reading this story at <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories>.

New Congress has a few more veterans, but still near a record low

by **Drew DeSilver**
Pew Research Center

The incoming House of Representatives will have 80 members who've served in the military at some level, or 18.4 percent of the total membership, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of this fall's election results. That's up from 75, or 17.2 percent, in the outgoing Congress. The number of senators who are veterans, 17, will stay the same.

Although 191 vets won their parties' nominations for House seats in 2022, only 80 of them won in the general election — and 62 of the victors were incumbents.

The next House will still have one of the smallest shares of veteran members in modern times. Between 1965 and 1975, at least 70 percent of members in each chamber had military experience, reflecting the mass mobilizations of World War II and the Korean War. (The first Vietnam War combat veteran elected to Congress, John Murtha of Pennsylvania, won his seat in 1974.)

While the sources consulted by the Center for this analysis aren't always specific about when or where members served, it's clear that most of the vets in the new Congress are from

the post-Vietnam era. Among all 97 House and Senate veterans who'll be serving in the next Congress, 31 are in their 50s, 21 are in their 40s, and nine are in their 30s.

More than three-quarters of vet-

erans in the new House (62) are Republicans, while fewer than a quarter (18) are Democrats. On the other side of the Capitol, 10 of the 17 veteran senators are Republicans and seven are Democrats. In both chambers combined, all but seven

veteran lawmakers are men.

The Army, including the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard, is the best-represented branch among the incoming group of senators and representatives with military experience.

More than 40 percent of all the veterans in the next House (36 of 80) served in the regular Army, the Reserve or the National Guard. That compares with 22 who served in the Navy or Navy Reserve; 13 who served in the Air Force, Air Force Reserve or Air N.G.; and 11 who served in the Marines or the Marine Corps Reserve. (Two members served in two different branches of the military; they're counted in each branch's total. Rep. Jack Bergman, R-Michigan, served in the Marines and the Rhode Island N.G., but is included only in the Marines total, because our sources did not specify whether he served in the Army or Air Force unit of the Guard.)

Over in the Senate, seven senators and senators-elect served in the Army, Army Reserve or Army National Guard; five served in the Navy or Navy Reserve; four in the Marines or the Marine Corps Reserve; and two in the Air Force, Air Force Reserve or Air N.G. One senator — Todd

Young, R-Indiana — served in both the Navy and the Marines.

In this fall's general elections, we counted 125 Republican House candidates who were veterans (47 incumbents and 78 non-incumbents), of whom roughly half (all 47 incumbents and 15 of the non-incumbents) won their races.

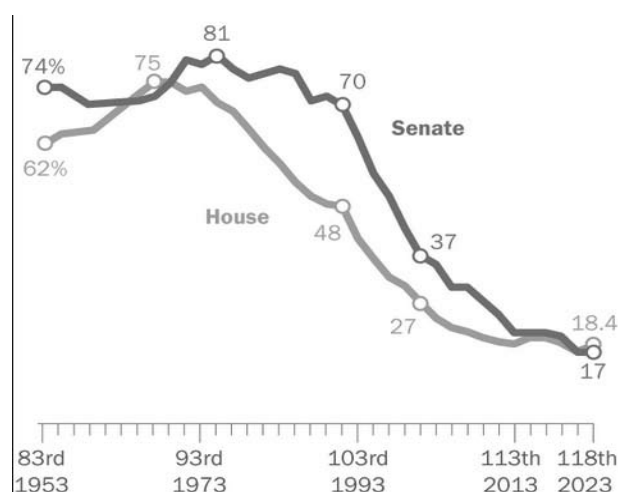
Of the 61 veteran nominees on the Democratic side (16 incumbents and 45 non-incumbents), all but one of the incumbents — but just three of the non-incumbents — won their

races. All five of the independent and minor-party candidates we identified who were veterans also lost.

The Senate's vet membership will hold even at 17 next year, as four veteran senators won reelection and one retiring veteran senator (James Inhofe, R-Oklahoma, who served in the Army) was offset by one successful veteran candidate (J.D. Vance, R-Ohio, a former Marine). Ten of this year's 35 Senate contests featured at least one veteran candidate; in the Indiana race, both major-party candidates were veterans.

Share of members in Congress who are veterans has fallen in recent decades

% of members with previous military service



Note: Data does not include nonvoting delegates or commissioners. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of data from Military Times, Congressional Research Service, Brookings Institution and House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. PEW RESEARCH CENTER

More congressional veterans served in the Army than in any other branch of the armed forces

Veterans in the 118th Congress by branch

Branch	House	Senate	Total
Army/Army Reserve/Army National Guard	36	7	43
Navy/Navy Reserve	22	5	27
Air Force/Air Force Reserve/Air National Guard	13	2	15
Marines/Marine Corps Reserve	11	4	15

Note: Data does not include nonvoting delegates or commissioners. Two representatives and one senator served in multiple military branches; they are counted in each of the branches they served in. Rep. Jack Bergman served in the Marines and the Rhode Island National Guard but is included only in the Marines total, because our sources did not specify whether he served in the Army or Air Force unit of the Guard. Source: Pew Research Center analysis.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

"What should I make for dinner?" I asked my Navy retiree husband, Francis, the other day, like I have a million times in our 29-year marriage.

"I'm not having dinner tonight," he replied with an expression of disciplined superiority — a most unusual response from Francis, who was not one to turn down meals. In fact, his love for pasta, pizza, bread, cheeseburgers, hoagies, sausages, meatloaf, anything drenched in mayon-aisse, cookies, peanuts, and cheese and crackers was well-known in our family.

Sensing my shock and confusion, Francis explained, "A medical assistant is coming to-morrow morning at eight-thirty to do a health check that's required for our new life insurance policy to be approved. She has to do vitals, a blood draw, a urine sample, and I'm supposed to fast for twelve hours beforehand. So, I'm just going to have a snack for dinner," he said, proud of himself for going the extra mile.

We'd made the decision to get more life insurance a while back, after I told Francis I was nervous that, God forbid anything should happen to him, I'd be left with our large mortgage payment, my small second income from two jobs, and would likely be forced sell the house and move again.

One man's fast is another man's feast

He made the mistake of suggesting, "You could just turn the house into a bed and break-fast." I reminded him that I neglected my career as a lawyer to follow him around for 28 years of active duty service in the Navy through eleven moves, took the primary role in raising our three children and maintaining our various homes, and currently have two part-time jobs that keep me far too busy to "just turn the house into a bed and breakfast."

We contacted our financial manager who, after admonishing us for not buying more life insurance a long time ago, set us up with new policies. The health check was required before the policies would activate.

After announcing his fast, Francis foraged in the pantry for the "light snack" he'd decided would be a substitute for his normal dinner, and toddled off to the living room to watch reruns of "House Hunters."

An hour later, I found him laying across the love seat, with a load of crumbs on his sweater. "You should watch this one with me," he said, supporting his head with one folded arm and holding a glass of bourbon on ice in the other, "they're buying a house in Charleston." I no-ticed two empty bags on the floor — one for tortilla chips and one for cheese popcorn. "I fin-ished off a couple snacks that had already been opened," he explained as if he'd done our family some kind of favor.

I was in the kitchen baking cookies with our daughters when Francis

snuck back to the pantry. "Are you sure you don't want a little dinner?" I offered, but he waved me off, refreshed his cocktail, and returned to the living room cradling something under his arm.

I found him later, with a bag of gingersnaps on his chest, chewing one and holding the next one between his thumb and forefinger. There was a jar of dry-roasted peanuts wedged between his hip and the love seat cushion. "It's not eight-thirty yet," he mumbled through chomps, "I still have a few more minutes left."

At nine-fifteen, I was in the laundry room when I heard our daughters yell, "Dad, you're supposed to be fasting!" I poked my head into the kitchen to see Francis foraging in the cheese drawer of the refrigerator.

"Honey!" I blared, worried that his blood test was already coursing with salt, alcohol and sugar. "Why didn't you just eat dinner?" He tsked and moped back to the loveseat.

A week later, Francis thumped down the stairs from his office and haughtily announced, "Our new life insurance policy was approved!" Although his intonation said "How dare you doubt me!" the look on his face showed unmistakable relief. I was relieved that I would no longer be required to "just turn the house into a bed and breakfast."

"So," Francis asked with an unflinching tone of self-satisfaction, "What's for dinner?"

My harrowing drive to and from Consumer Electronics Show

The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas has never disappointed me, presenting an incredible variety of the newest, state-of-the-art products and technology. This year's show was no exception — even including some auto racing: a follow-up round of the Indy Autonomous Challenge at Las Vegas Motor Speedway!

I returned home a little past midnight last night, with suitcases full of material to share with you in the weeks and months ahead but, since today's column is due shortly after noon, in today's column I'll share with you a story from the road — about my harrowing drive to and from Las Vegas.

I always drive to Las Vegas. It is very helpful to have a car there, to drive back and forth to the various CES venues. I have stayed at the Excalibur Resort for several years. It is comfortable, convenient and even has free EV charging for my RAV4 Prime! I did all of my driving in Las Vegas on that free electricity.

I left for Las Vegas a week ago yesterday (Monday). I'd planned to leave early in the day but, as is usually the case, I was busy working on my column and ended up leaving very late — about 7 p.m. That was very unfortunate.

By the time that I left San Diego it had begun to rain, which fell intermittently throughout my drive to where I stopped to take a short nap at a rest stop on the California side of the I-15 highway, a few miles from the Nevada border. It turned out that my having done so was very fortunate.

When I returned to the highway,

to complete my drive to Las Vegas, almost immediately I encountered a terrifying, white-out blizzard. It was very late at night, and the rain that I had been driving through earlier had turned to a very wet, very heavy snowfall. It quickly turned into whiteout conditions, falling so

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heavily that the highway markings (the reflective Bots dots included) were completely covered-over with fresh-fallen, deep snow, and visibility ahead was almost non-existent.

Decades ago, I grew up in Alberta, Canada, so I was no stranger to driving in snow — albeit of the much colder, drier variety. Little did I know when I left balmy San Diego on Monday evening that I would need to draw upon that experience on my drive to Las Vegas, but that I did. My life, and the lives of the drivers around me, depended upon that.

First, I slowed way down to about 30 mph. Like the other drivers, I turned on my vehicle's four-way flashers, so that I could be seen — in case someone was foolish enough to

come barreling along too fast and not see that I was there.

Since I could not see the road, I decided to follow another vehicle's taillights. I slotted in behind a tall vehicle (a motorhome, I think), with lots of rear lights. As I followed him, I began to feel vibrations, as if I were driving on a progressively rougher road. Fearful that the motorhome may have been heading off of the road, I pulled in behind a Target semitrailer truck. He (or she) had even brighter taillights, and seemed to know where he was going. Eventually we emerged safely from the snow.

Unfortunately, my return trip a week and a day later was not much better. I had checked out of my hotel at 1pm, but I chose to use the afternoon and early evening to shop and take photos on the Las Vegas Strip. By the time I'd had something to eat and was ready to drive home to San Diego, it was again after 7 p.m. Once again it was raining. Unfortunately it progressed from a light rain to one so heavy that again I could barely see. At least in the rain I was still sort of able to see the lane markings in the road. Once again I, like most of the other drivers, turned on the four-way flashers and managed to make it safely through the deluge, returning home after midnight last night.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit "AutoMatters & More" at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page, or click on the blue "years" boxes and browse. Copyright © 2023 by Jan Wagner — AutoMatters & More #774

Healthy weight control: Balancing eating and exercise

Keeping off weight during the holiday season can be tough. But there are many reasons to maintain a healthy weight all year round. A healthy weight lowers your risk for chronic diseases, like diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers. It can also help you stay more mobile as you age.

Excess weight comes from taking in more energy, or calories, than your body needs. Some extra energy may be stored as fat. Many factors influence your risk for weight gain. These include poor diet, lack of sleep, and not getting enough physical activity. Genes can also play a role. Certain medications affect weight gain, too.

"In the U.S., we all live in an obesity-promoting environment to some degree," says Dr. Susan Yanovski, an NIH expert on obesity and eating disorders. "We are constantly tempted with low-cost, high-calorie foods. And, we're expending a lot less energy than we used to in everyday life. Many jobs are sedentary, and even household activities like washing dishes take less energy to do now. You throw them in the dishwasher. We have to work hard to incorporate activity into our everyday life."

Taking steps toward a healthy lifestyle—even small ones—can help you get on a path to a healthy weight.

Calculating a Healthy Weight

The definitions of overweight and obesity are based on body mass index, or BMI. BMI is based on your height and weight. Overweight for adults is a BMI between 25 and 29.9. Obesity is a BMI of 30 or greater. NIH has a tool to help you calculate your BMI.

"BMI is quick and easy to obtain, but it's not perfect," Yanovski says. A high BMI is usually caused by extra body fat. But it can also come from extra muscle, bone, or water.

If your BMI is high because of extra body fat, aim to lose about one to two pounds per week. "Some people might think losing weight quickly is the best strategy," says Dr. Alison Brown, a nutrition scientist at NIH. "But really, the safer and more sustainable weight loss is gradual."

To lose weight, you need to burn more calories than you take in. "Combining both calorie restriction plus physical activity tends to be most effective for weight loss," Brown says.

Cutting Down Calories

To lose weight, experts suggest taking in about 500 fewer calories than you burn per day. This should get you to about one pound per week of weight loss, Yanovski says.

The NIH Body Weight Planner can help you calculate exactly how many calories you need for your weight loss goals. The tool takes your age, sex, and level of physical activity into account.

Experts recommend limiting less



healthy foods that are high in calories, saturated and trans fats, refined carbohydrates, or sugar. "But there's not one recommended diet for weight loss," Yanovski says.

"The best diet is the one that you can stick with," explains Brown. "It should be balanced and provide a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and low-fat dairy or dairy alternatives."

Creating an eating plan based on your likes and dislikes can help you stick with it. You can use nutrition labels to estimate how many calories a food has. But be sure to check the serving sizes.

"It is easier than it's ever been to try to figure out what you're actually taking in with all the trackers and food labeling," says Yanovski. "But, of course, you have to be honest with

yourself." A registered dietitian or a weight management program can also help you create a healthy eating plan.

Getting More Activity

Physical activity helps you burn off the calories you consume. Studies have found that it's critical for maintaining a stable weight.

Experts recommend that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. Aerobic activity is anything that gets your heart rate up and gets you breathing harder. Examples of moderate-intensity activities include brisk walking (faster than 2.5 miles per hour), swimming, and dancing.

If you're able, start increasing your physical activity. Doing so slowly can help prevent injuries. Even light activity burns more calories than

being sedentary. Start small. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Break up your day with short walks.

You can also break up moderate-intensity activity into short sessions. Every minute counts toward your weekly goal!

Don't forget to do muscle-strengthening activities, like lifting weights. Experts recommend adults do them at least two days a week.

Staying on Track

Creating new habits can help you lose and maintain your weight. Weigh yourself regularly to see if you're meeting your weekly goals. You can use an app or journal to track your physical activity and food intake. Some devices can automatically track and record your activity. Calculate whether you're burning

more calories than you're taking in.

Getting social support can help keep you motivated. Apps and social media sites may connect you with other people who support your goals.

"But often, people differ in terms of what they consider supportive," notes Dr. Laurie Friedman Donze, a clinical psychologist at NIH. "So it's important to communicate with your support system and let them know what you feel is helpful or unhelpful."

"Trying to keep your stress under control and getting enough sleep are also good for preventing weight gain," says Donze. "Stress can affect food cravings. Often, people will eat to reduce stress or as a way to comfort themselves. Not getting enough sleep may also increase your appetite

or cravings for high-fat foods."

"No matter what your weight loss goal is," says Brown, "it takes time. Be patient with the process."

It can be difficult to lose or keep weight off. Some people may benefit from medication or surgery in addition to lifestyle changes. If you're struggling with losing weight or maintaining weight loss, ask your health care provider if medications or surgery may be helpful for you.

"An NIH study, called POWERS, is studying why some people struggle over time to maintain weight loss and why some are going to find it easier," says Yanovski.

"We hope to come up with better strategies for people who struggle with obesity and to individualize solutions for keeping lost weight off."

Red Cross, Peyton Manning huddle up for a lifesaving play this January

Those who come to give blood or platelets during National Blood Donor Month will be entered to win a trip to Super Bowl LVII

This January, the American Red Cross and Pro Football Hall of Famer and blood donor Peyton Manning are asking people to score big for patients in need – while getting a chance to win a trip to Super Bowl LVII in Arizona – by giving blood or platelets.

The start of the new year marks National Blood Donor Month – a time to celebrate those who generously roll up a sleeve to keep blood products stocked for hospitals providing critical care. As the busy holiday season winds down and the threat of severe winter weather and seasonal illness cases continue to rise, January can be a tough time for donors to make and keep appointments.

Step off the sidelines and resolve to donate blood or platelets. To book a time to give, visit RedCrossBlood.org, download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). In partnership with the National Football League (NFL), those who come to give blood, platelets or plasma Jan. 1-31, 2023, will be automatically entered to win a trip for two to Super Bowl LVII in Arizona*, including access to day-of, in-stadium pre-game activities, tickets to the official Super Bowl Experience, round-trip airfare to Phoenix, three-night hotel accommodations (Feb. 10-13, 2023), plus a \$500 gift card for expenses.

To lead the offense against a potential winter blood shortage, Manning invites the public to join him in helping save lives. "If everyone does their part and we collectively commit to donating blood, we can stack up more wins for hospital patients who are counting on us. A single individual is certainly impactful, but a whole team of people coming together to donate has an even



greater effect."

To donate: download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Upcoming donation opportunities

Carlsbad
1/23/2023: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce, 5934 Priestly Dr.
1/24/2023: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., North Coast Church Carlsbad Campus, 2310 Camino Vida Roble, #104Ch

Coronado
1/17/2023: 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Coronado High School, 650 D Avenue
El Cajon
1/26/2023: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., East County Transitional Living Center, 1527 E Main Street
1/29/2023: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Parkway Plaza, 415 Parkway Plaza

Encinitas
1/22/2023: 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m., Best Buy, 1046 N. El Camino Real
1/31/2023: 10:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., Best Buy, 1046 N. El Camino Real

Escondido
1/21/2023: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Escondido East Valley Community Center, 2245 East Valley Parkway
1/29/2023: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Westfield North County, 272 E. Via Rancho Pkwy
1/31/2023: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Escondido Police Department, 1163 N. Centre

City Parkway
Fallbrook
1/17/2023: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Fallbrook Library, 124 South Mission Rd
1/25/2023: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Christ the King Lutheran Church, 1620 S Stage Coach Lane

La Jolla
1/24/2023: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., University California San Diego School of Medicine Learning Center, 9500 Gillman Drive

Oceanside
1/19/2023: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Courtyard by Marriott San Diego Oceanside, 3501 Seagate Way
1/19/2023: 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m., El Camino High School, 400 Rancho Del Oro
1/26/2023: 8 a.m. - 7 p.m., Oceanside Masonic Center, 511 Eucalyptus

San Diego
Red Cross Kearny Mesa Blood Donation Center, 4229 Ponderosa Ave., Suite C. See RedCrossBlood.org for hours
1/18/2023: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., American Legion Post 460, 7815 Armour St
1/24/2023: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., San Ysidro High School, 5353 Airway Rd
1/25/2023: 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., San Diego State University Aztec Walk, 5500 Campanile Dr
1/28/2023: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Mission Valley Library, 2123 Fenton Parkway
1/30/2023: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Black Mountain Middle School, 9353 Oviedo Street

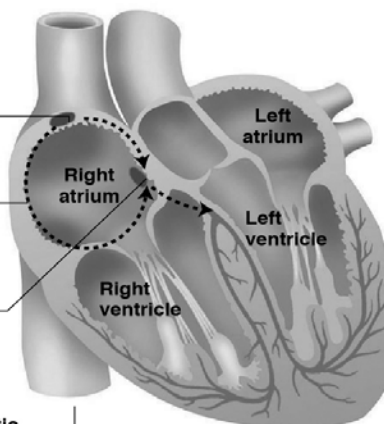
Sudden cardiac arrest in athletes

Sudden cardiac arrest, a leading killer of young athletes, results mostly from a congenital heart abnormality.

What happens

Life-threatening arrhythmias

1. Abnormal electrical signal from sino-atrial node
2. Signal conducted through atria, stimulates faster contractions
3. Abnormal electrical signal from atrio-ventricular node



- Rapid rhythm, ventricular tachycardia
- Chaotic rhythm, ventricular fibrillation

Can cause heart to stop beating

• 90% of affected athletes collapse with arrhythmia during or right after training or competition, with death quickly following

• Usually athlete has no symptom before fatal event

Main causes

Cardiac abnormalities

- Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy 46% (thickened heart muscle)
- Anomalous origin in left main coronary artery 10%
- Inflamed heart muscle 6%
- Other anomalies 28%
- Cardiac concussion (chest trauma) 10%
- Drug-related arrhythmia

Source: American Heart Association, Journal of Athletic Training
Graphic: Staff, TNS

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